

Swimming Safety

Enjoy the water safely by taking steps to prevent recreational water illnesses (RWIs). RWIs are illnesses spread by swallowing, breathing in vapors of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, spas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans. The best way to prevent RWIs is to keep germs out of the water.

Everyone can help create healthy swimming experiences. Follow these tips when swimming in a pool:

- Don't swallow pool water.
- Practice good hygiene, which includes showering with soap before swimming and washing your hands after using the toilet or changing a child's diaper.
- Take children on bathroom breaks or check diapers often.
- Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside.

Follow these tips when swimming in fresh water lakes and rivers:

- Avoid water-related activities in bodies of warm freshwater, hot springs, and thermally-polluted water such as water around power plants.
- Avoid water-related activities in warm freshwater during periods of high water temperature and low water levels.
- Hold the nose shut or use nose clips when taking part in water-related activities in bodies of warm freshwater such as lakes, rivers, or hot springs.
- Avoid digging in or stirring up the sediment in shallow, warm freshwater areas.

Creating a safe environment is just as important as creating a healthy environment. Injuries at aquatics facilities can occur in or out of the water and are largely preventable. Everyone can help create a safe recreational water environment by practicing these tips:

- Watch children at all times—they can drown in seconds and in silence and should not be left alone.
- Don't use air-filled swimming aids or toys in place of life jackets or life preservers.
- Protect against sunburn by using a sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and both UVA and UVB protection, and re-apply it after swimming.
- Swim with a buddy and select swimming sites that have lifeguards whenever possible.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming, boating or other water activities.
- Adults should learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In the time it might take for paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could make a difference in someone's life. CPR performed by bystanders has been shown to improve outcomes in drowning victims.

DROWNING PREVENTION

- Constantly watch children who are in or near water and keep them within reach.
- Ensure rescue equipment and emergency contact numbers are easily accessible.